

X

THE
CHRISTIAN'S
WAY
TO
HEAVEN:
OR,

What he must do to be SAVED.

By a Divine of the
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

THE NINTH EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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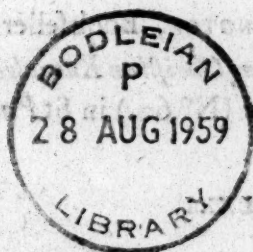
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THE
CHRISTIAN
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OF

My dear Friends,

I Here offer to you a plain Sermon in Print, that it may stay longer with you than it could do by the *Preaching*. It does contain, in short, the main Duties of our Holy Religion, which we hope to be saved by, and which we ought at all times to have present to our Minds. May the good God of Heaven bless it to your Edification, as I pray he may do the rest of the Endeavours of

Your Faithful Servant



in CHRIST JESUS.

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THE
CHRISTIAN'S WAY
TO
HEAVEN.

ACTS XVI. 30, 31.

Sirs, What must I do to be SAVED?

And they said, Believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House.

WHEN the Apostle St Paul, and his Companion Silas, had, upon Account of the Uproar of the Multitude against them, been commanded to Prison by the Magistrates, and had *their Feet made fast in the Stocks*; God Almighty was pleased to shew a very great Miracle for their Deliverance. For upon their Praying and singing Praises unto God, there was suddenly a very great Earthquake, so that the Foundations of the Prison

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were shaken; and immediately all the Doors were opened, and every one's Bands were loosed. This put the Keeper of the Prison into a great Consternation, upon the supposed Loss of his Prisoners; so that he would, had he not been prevented, have laid violent Hands upon himself. But his Fear abated on St Paul's assuring him they were all there; and the Sense of the miraculous Occurrence so awakened him into religious Thoughts, that it put him upon Inquiry, how he might obtain Happiness in another World. He was now verily persuaded of the Truth in general of what these good Men taught, that their Religion was from God; who had done so great a Miracle in favour of it; he did heartily believe that that Salvation of Mens Souls in another World, which they Preached, would be the Lot of all those good Persons who followed the Doctrines they were Preachers of; but still he was ignorant of those Precepts he was to practise in order to his Happiness, and that was the Reason that with so great Earnestness he cried out, *Sirs, What must I do to be Saved?* That is, "I have now a Mind to be a Christian, and to enter into that Covenant with God, which he has been pleased to offer to Mankind by Jesus Christ; of the Truth of whose Mission, and the Sincerity of whose Promises, I am verily persuaded; but I beseech you to inform me of the Condition of this Covenant, which I am a perfect Stranger to, and to tell me what I am to do on my Part in order to attain that Happiness, which God promises to confer on his." To this the Apostles answer, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House:* That is, you shall obtain this your Desire of Everlasting Happiness, if you stedfastly believe and sincerely practise the Precepts of that Religion
which

which was declared to the World by Jesus Christ ; and which you shall learn by our Instruction. For it is plain, that by this the Apostles did not mean a bare Belief, but a Performance of the other Duties likewise recommended by the Gospel Dispensation. For in the next Words it is said, *That they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his House ;* ver. 32. That is, they instructed him in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and explained to him what he was to Believe and Practise in this Gospel-Covenant, that he might be Partaker of those Promises he was desirous of.

Now in discoursing to you upon these Words, I shall draw up, in a narrow Compass, all the General Rules and Obligations of the Christian Religion, which will be useful for you upon these two Accounts.

FIRST, Because by this you may see your whole Duty at one View, which will be serviceable to you, in reducing to an easy Method what you have read and heard in good Books and Sermons ; and will be more especially useful to them who have not Time or Money to read or buy large Treatises on these Subjects.

SECONDLY, Because by having these Terms of Salvation ready in your Mind, you will not be so easily subject to Despondencies, or uncomfortable Reflections upon the Danger of your Mis-carriage in a future State ; for when you fully understand upon what Conditions every Man may certainly be saved ; you need not trouble yourselves to wait for any particular Marks of Assurance, which, after all, a Man may be deceived

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in. But no Man has Reason to distrust, that God Almighty will not reward him with Eternal Happiness, when he is sure he has discharged those Conditions which God in his Holy Word has promised eternal Happiness to.

NOW these Conditions or Qualifications of Salvation, I shall reduce to as few Heads as conveniently I can, and speak to them in their order.

CONDITION I.

To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

FIRST, You cannot be saved, unless you believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the main Articles of Faith contained in it. For the Scripture says expressly; *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned,* Mark xvi. 16. Therefore you must believe, that there is one only (a) Eternal, (b) Almighty, (c) All-wise, and (d) Merciful God, who created (e) all Things by his Almighty Wisdom and Power, and governs (f) them by his Providence; that he has sent his only Son Christ Jesus into the World, to Redeem, by his Blood, (g) the forfeited Souls of sinful Mankind; and you must believe, that there is the holy Spirit (h) of God, the Comforter, which

(a) Deut. iv. 25. 1 Cor. viii. 4. Isa. xlv. 5. John xvii. 3. Isa. xlviii. 12. Gen. xxi. 33. 1 Tim. i. 17. (b) Gen. xvii. 1. Matt. iii. 9. Eph. iii. 20. (c) Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Tim. i. 17. Job xi. 7. (d) Exod. xxxiv. 6. Luke i. 50. 2 Cor. i. 3. (e) Exod. xxxi. 17. Acts xvii. 24. (f) For the Providence of God, see Psalm xxxvii. Prov. xi. 31. Job xxxvi. 6. Matt. vi. 28. (g) John viii. 42. 1 Tim. i. 15. Eph. i. 7. (h) John xxiv. 16. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John v. 14.

which our Saviour promised to send, which does continually put into our Mind good Desires, does keep us from Temptations, (*i*) does Sanctify (*k*) all good Mens Hearts, and render them acceptable unto God. You must stedfastly believe that the Holy Scriptures are the (*l*) inspired Word of God; and particularly, that the Miracles and Doctrines of our blessed Saviour were really true, and such as they are there recorded to be. Now unless you cordially believe these Things, you can have no Pretence to enter into Covenant with God in this Christian Dispensation, and to be intitled to the Salvation proposed by Jesus Christ: for otherwise you are *Infidels*; and though you should outwardly join yourselves in Communion with Christ's Flock, yet you will receive no more Benefit by that, than if you were *Mahometans* or *Pagans*. Therefore, in the first Place, you must take Care to have a firm Belief of these Things, and to be *always ready to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you*; that is, to believe the Doctrines of Christianity upon rational Grounds, not to stick to them only upon the Prejudice of your Education, but because, upon full Search and Inquiry, you find all the Reason in the World to believe them. Whenever you find any unbelieving Thought to rise up in your Minds, which the Devil will never be wanting, upon Occasion, to suggest, use your utmost Endeavour to shake off that ungodly Doubt, by confronting it with some indubitable Truth, or by getting further Information of abler Christians. But above all, by constant Reading and

A 4

Study-

(*i*) 2 Pet. ii. 9. Rom. viii. 26. Rev. xii. 10.
 (*k*) Tit. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. (*l*) 2 Tim. iii. 16.
 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Studying God's Word (*m*), and by fervent Prayer to him to help your unbelief; for you may be assured, that ten to one more *Infidels* are made by a Neglect of Reading the Scriptures, and of daily Prayers to God, than by all the poisoned Books and Discourses which are levelled against our Religion. And I would have you observe farther, which is a great Argument for you to settle in your Hearts a firm Belief of all the Gospel Truths, that there is hardly any Wickedness which Men commit, or any Sin they fall into, but it proceeds chiefly from some kind of Infidelity or other; because they do not rightly believe the Providence of God, or his Justice, or Mercy, or Veracity; but have got into their Heads some fond Notion of their own concerning these Attributes, which may better agree with their vicious Lives, than that Idea which God has given of himself in his Holy Word. Therefore be sure to be well principled, and to have true Notions of these Matters; use your utmost Endeavours firmly to believe, and fully to understand all that the Holy Scriptures say concerning them; for this is the Foundation of all true Religion: and unless this be rightly laid, all the other Building, which may be raised afterwards, falls to the Ground, and comes to nothing.

CONDITION II.

To avoid all gross Sins.

SECONDLY, *AFTER the Believing of the Gospel Truths; in the next Place, in order to your Salvation, and as another Branch of your Covenant with Christ, you must leave off all gross and apparent Sins. For a Man, whilst he lives a lewd and*

(*m*) John v. 39. Acts xvii. 4. Rom. xv. 4.

and vicious Life, can have no Hopes of Salvation: such, by the whole Tenor of the Gospel, being excluded from it. The Apostle St Paul gives you a long Catalogue of such Sins as are inconsistent with Salvation. *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.* Therefore if you would have any hope of going to Heaven; you must leave off a wicked course of Life; you must take Care to repent of, and to forsake such Sins as will shut you out from thence. You cannot expect to go thither, whilst you live in a State of Adultery or Uncleanness; if you are not just in your Dealings, and do not make Satisfaction and Reparation for all the Wrongs and Injuries you have done; if you live in a Course of Drunkenness; if you are guilty of Profane Swearing and Cursing; if you live Quarrellsomy and Contentiously with your Neighbours; if you be Proud and Haughty, Malicious and Revengeful. Therefore it behoves you, not only to be careful to avoid Drunkenness, Incontinency, and other fleshly Sins, but to divest yourselves of Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; for these spiritual Vices are as much inconsistent with a State of Christianity as the fleshly; they do as much Mischief in this World, and make a Man as unqualified for the other; and you may further take Notice, that the most wicked Beings of all God's Creation, I mean the Devils in Hell, have no Sins of the Flesh to answer for, and yet

they shall undergo the most terrible Damnation for their Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; which too many Men do look upon, in themselves at least, as hardly any Sins at all.

CONDITION III.

To avoid every single Sin we know to be such.

THIRDLY, *I N* order to your Salvation, you must take care not only to avoid a settled Course of Wickedness, or a Life of Viciousness, but to root out of your Hearts every single Sin you find there. There is a great many Men, that for the generality live good and virtuous Lives, but yet there is some bosom Sin they indulge themselves in, and do, as it were, compound with God Almighty to part with all the Rest to retain that. Thus there are several who can without any great difficulty refrain from Intemperance or Covetousness, or Pride, or Contention, so they may but enjoy their Lust. To another, Covetousness is the only Darling, and he can be content to be Chaste and Sober, in hopes that God will excuse him for being Hard and Griping. Mistake not; God Almighty does expect to be loved with all the Mind, and all the Soul, and all the Strength, *Matt. xii. 30. We must perfect Holiness in the Fear of the Lord, 2 Cor. vii. 1.* And we are taught, *that he who shall keep the whole Law, and offend in one Point, he is guilty of all, James ii. 10.* That is, he shall as effectually be damned for that one Sin unrepented of, as if he had been guilty of many more Sins. Therefore do not cheat yourselves, and fool yourselves out of your precious Souls, by thinking you shall ever go to Heaven by serving God by Halves. God Almighty will either have your whole Souls, or none;

none; he will never suffer you to make Him a Sharer with the Devil. Do not think it will avail you to say, it is but one Sin; for that one is fatal. For Sin to the Soul, is like a strong Poison to the Body, a Drop of it is as killing as if you drank a Gallon. So that upon the whole, you have no Way to secure your Salvation, but by forsaking every known Sin, though never so small in your Opinion; if you know it to be Sin, you must know it to be Damnable, and that there is no Salvation to be expected while you continue in it. Therefore you must frequently examine your Consciences, and strictly survey and look into every Corner of your Soul, and whatever Sin you find there, dispatch it without any Quarter, and do not put it off from Time to Time, as being unwilling to part with it, but take the first Opportunity to repent of and amend it; beg God Almighty's Pardon for the former Commission of it, and his Grace for the future to avoid it.

CONDITION IV.

To practise all the Gospel Virtues.

FOURTHLY, *THE next step you must take, in order to be saved, is to practise the Gospel Virtues; which you find laid down in God's Word for your Christian Performance.* For Christianity does not consist only of a few negative Precepts; it does not oblige you just only to avoid Sin, but it engages you to the Performance of several Virtues and Graces; which unless you can make yourselves Masters of, you cannot be qualified for Heaven. Do not be cheated with that Notion, which some silly People have of a good Man, as when they say, Such a one is a good Man, because he does no Body any Harm; as if it was enough to be Religious.

Religious, not to be Mischievous. For a Man may abstain from this, upon account of good Nature, and a Gentleman-like Education : and besides, this singly of itself is no great Matter of Virtue, and is no more than what Stocks and Stones, and tame Beasts may pretend to ; for they likewise do no Body any Harm. But true Christianity has in it more Spirit and Vigour ; it is a Life of Action ; and those who pretend to it, must not only avoid all ill Things, but they must do a great many good ones.

HUMILITY.

YOU must learn therefore to practise the Christian Grace of *Humility* (*n*) ; you must have as mean Thoughts as possibly you can of yourselves, upon Consideration that all you can boast of does proceed from the free Gift of God ; you must not despise the meanest of your Fellow-Creatures ; but rather glorify your gracious God, who has been pleased to bestow on you more liberal Talents ; and lastly, you must shew to all a meek and courteous Behaviour, considering that they proceed from the same common Stock, and do partake of the same common Nature with you, and that Christ condescended to die for the Poorest as well as the Greatest.

PATIENCE.

YOU must likewise adorn your Souls with *Patience* (*o*), and bear your Afflictions with a true Christian Magnanimity and Fortitude, and with a perfect Resignation to the good Will of God, considering that he sends those Sufferings
out

(*n*) Matt. xx. 26. (*o*) Luke xxi. 19. James
v. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 20.

out of a pure fatherly Kindness and Correction, to wean us from the World, and to bring us nigher unto him : to give us Demonstration of our Legitimacy in Grace, and that we are not Bastards, but Sons.

FORGIVENESS, and LOVE of our Enemies.

WE must learn likewise to *forgive our Enemies ; to do good to them that hate us ; and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us (p) ;* considering that we have for this the express Command and Example of our Blessed Lord, and that a meek and peaceable Disposition is the greatest Ornament of a Christian ; and does not only conduce to the Peace and Quiet of the World, but to a Man's own Satisfaction ; whilst Malice and Revenge do rack the Soul with continual Torment, and turn Society and Neighbourhood into Tumults and Flames.

CHARITY of Opinion.

YOU must likewise endeavour to make yourselves eminent in other Acts of *Charity (q)*. You must be Charitable in your Opinions and Censures of other Men : you must not be too forward in believing slanderous Reports, nor too busy in relating other Mens Failures ; you must have a Care of denouncing Damnation upon all who differ in Religious Matters from you ; but let your Love go with them with whom your Opinions cannot.

CHARITY of Relief.

YOU must, according to your Abilities, be liberal unto the Poor (*r*), considering that God has

(p) Matt. v. 44. (q) 1 Cor. xiii. 4. (r) Deut. xv. 7. Ps. xli. 1. Luke xiv. 13. Prov. xxviii. 27.

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has made us, who are in a better Capacity, Stewards for them ; and the Scriptures assure us, that *he who is Merciful to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord* ; and therefore we may be sure, when God Almighty has engaged himself to be our Debtor, he will repay us with the greatest Interest.

MORTIFICATION and SELF-DENIAL.

OUR Religion obliges us yet farther to a higher Duty, and which does run a little more contrary to the Stream of our natural Inclinations, and that is, to *Mortification and Self-denial* (*s*), And to *mortify our Members*, and to *deny all Ungodliness and world'y Lusts*, Tit. ii. 12. is not without Reason enjoined us. For though we may live an ordinary Life of Virtue, without undergoing these severer Duties, yet it is very difficult to do it ; and if we do not restrain and abridge our Appetites oftentimes in lawful Things, they will be apt to grow so Headstrong, that we shall be hardly able to keep them from unlawful ones. Besides, since God Almighty has designed this World only as a State of Probation for the other, where there is none of these sensual Enjoyments to be found, it is but reasonable we should be something weaned from these lower Pleasures, that we may be able to relish those high and exalted ones which are designed for us hereafter. These, and all other Virtues which are prescribed to you by God's Word, you must exercise yourselves in, in this your Christian Warfare ; you must run this Race which God has set before you, if you would obtain the Crown which is laid up for you. And to do this the better, let this be your constant Rule ; to do every thing
with

(*s*) Matt. v. 29. Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5.

with readiness, which you are persuaded will be acceptable to God, and to let your Light shine before Men, that is, to endeavour to shew the best Example in Religion, which, without Ostentation and Vanity, you possibly can; and lastly, to do all the Good you can in your Generation; if you do this sincerely, though it may be with a great deal of Imperfection, God Almighty in his Goodness will accept this imperfect, for a complete Obedience.

CONDITION V.

To observe the Ordinances of Christ, and his Holy Church, Public Prayer, as well as private, Morning and Evening.

FIFTHLY, NEXT, in order to your Salvation, you must be diligent in observing the Ordinances, which either Christ himself or his holy Church hath instituted, for the furtherance of Godliness and true Religion. Therefore you must be constant in the Duty of Prayer, as well Public as Private (*t*). You must at least twice every Day, Morning and Evening, betake yourselves to your Closets, or some private Place of your Houses, and there pray to God to forgive you whatever Offences you have committed, and to beg his Grace and Protection for the Time to come. If you neglect this Duty, you live the very Lives of *Heathens*, you quite put yourselves out of God's Favour and Care, which good Christians lay claim to, and have nothing but your bare Baptism to distinguish you from the profane *Pagans*.

Benefit

(*t*) Isa. l. 7. Luke xviii. 8. Acts iii. 1. Matt. xxi. 13. Matt. vii. 7. Luke viii. 1. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Psal. cxix. 164.

Benefit of public P R A Y E R.

YOU must likewise, at least upon Sundays and Holidays, attend the Public Service of the Church (*u*); for the Apostle taxes the forsaking the Assemblies as a great Fault, *Heb. x. 25*. And in the Public Congregation we may expect our Prayers to be sooner heard, when they are joined with the united Prayers of so many good People.

Hearing the WORD, and that from our own Ministers.

YOU must likewise be very diligent and attentive in *Hearing the Word of God*, as it is (*uv*) Preached by his Ministers; for the Scripture tells us, that *Faith comes by Hearing*, *Rom. x. 17*. And therefore you ought not to slight this great Means of your Salvation. Neither must you indulge yourselves in silly Fancies, in liking or not liking your Minister's Phrase or Action, but you ought chiefly to mind the Substance of what he says; for you may benefit enough, if you please, by the meanest Minister of the Gospel, if you hear him with that Soberness you ought; for let me tell you, the Fault of your not profiting does not so much lie in unedifying Ministers, as in unpractising Congregations. Nor must you run about, gadding to other Churches, to hear others you are better pleased with; for besides the great Fault you commit in discouraging your own Minister's Endeavours, you cannot expect that God should afford the same Blessing to the Hearing of the Word out of the Method he has prescribed,

(*u*) John iii. 2 Chron. xx. (*uv*) Rom. x. 17. Luke viii. 18.

prescribed, and from those to whom he has not given the Charge of your Souls.

Reading the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

YOU must likewise be constant in Reading God's Word (*x*), or getting it read to you; for this is the most considerable Motive you can make use of to a good Life; because then you hear God Almighty himself speaking to your Consciences, whose Authority will prevail much more with you than our Preaching; and besides, by this you may examine the Doctrine which we teach, and see that we do not impose upon you, but preach to you what is agreeable to that excellent Rule.

Frequent receiving the LORD's SUPPER.

YOU must furthermore, as frequently as conveniently you may, receive the *Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood*; for whilst you live in a constant Neglect of this, you have little Pretence to be Christians, because our blessed Lord has commanded all his Followers to *do this in Remembrance of him*; and if you will not thus Remember him, and shew this Token by your Communion with him and his Church, you do in effect deny your Baptismal Vow, and turn Renegados to the Religion of Christ. This is the Oath of Fidelity to our Heavenly Prince, which he has required of you frequently to renew; which if you refuse, you cast off all Allegiance and Subjection to him, and turn Rebels to his Administration. Whilst you neglect this, you deprive yourselves of the Grace of God's Holy Spirit,

(*x*) Matt. xxii. 29. John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.

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Spirit, which is plentifully conveyed by a due Receiving this Holy Sacrament ; you leave your Souls defenceless against all the Assaults of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, which may attack them ; and defraud yourselves of the Seal of God's Pardon for Sin, which is fully given to all worthy Receivers.

Religious observing SUNDAYS and HOLIDAYS

YOU must also Religiously observe all the *Feasts* and *Fasts* of the Church, not only by coming to Church on *Sundays*, *Fast-days* and *Holidays*, but by dedicating besides some considerable Part of them to your Religious Exercise in private.

Bringing Children to public BAPTISM, CATECHISM and CONFIRMATION.

YOU must, lastly, take care to bring your Children, as soon as may be, to partake of the *Holy Sacrament of Baptism* ; not at Home, as is the vain and irreligious Fashion of some, but to Church, where this Sacrament may be more solemnly administered, and where your Children may partake of the Joint Prayers of the Congregation of God's People : And when you have done so, you must see them well instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and that they come to take their Religion upon themselves, which their Sureties in Baptism promised they should, when the Bishop does administer the Sacred Ordinance of Confirmation.

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what he must do to be Saved.

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CONDITION VI.

To watch against all Temptations and Failures.

SIXTHLY, and LASTLY, IN order to Salvation, you must take Care to exercise another Duty, which is particularly recommended by our Saviour, as a Guard to all the rest; and that is Watchfulness, Matt. xxiv. 42. and xxv. 14. Acts xx. 31.

THOUGH you have truly repented of your Sins, and got into a Habit of Virtue, and a Religious Course of Life; yet if you have not a great Guard upon yourselves, you will insensibly relapse again into your former Condition: For you must needs think that the Devil will use the utmost of his Spite and Cunning, and will play his main Batteries upon those who have forsaken his Cause, and are obedient to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scripture informs you, that he goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. And you may reasonably suppose, that he will devour none so easily as those Christians who live off their Guard; therefore when you have forsaken a Course of Sin, and are arrived at a tolerable Perfection of Virtue and Godliness, do not sit down secure, as if there was nothing more to be done; for in your Christian Warfare there is Work enough to go forwards in, as long as you live. It requires a great deal of Diligence and Circumspection to keep the Ground you have already gotten, to stand firm against all Temptations, and to maintain your Integrity in a vicious Age, when Wickedness is oft-times applauded, and Virtue meets

meets with so great Discouragement. But there is hardly any standing at a Stay in a Religious Course ; you will either go Forwards or Backwards, and therefore be watchful, that you do not move the wrong Way ; and this you cannot be sure of, unless, as long as you live, you be improving in Virtue. I do not doubt, but many Christians are in a salvable State, that are subject to many Imperfections and Failures ; but as they live on, they must still go forwards in the Conquest of these. A sincere Penitent, who is just come out of a flagitious Course of Life, has enough to do to fence against the gross Sins he has so much been accustomed to ; but God expects from one who has been long habituated to a Course of Godliness, that he should be very watchful against all Human Imperfections whatsoever. Such a one must not think so easily to be excused from Sins of Ignorance, when after a long Exercise in hearing and reading God's Word, he might have better informed himself of his Duty ; he cannot so well plead Sins of Infirmary, when his Nature has very considerably lost its Bias to Sin by a long Course of Virtue. Therefore good Christians must be going forwards in a State of Virtue as long as they live ; they must be still bettering and improving their Natures, more and more informing their Understandings in Religious Truths, and rectifying their Wills ; they will find Work enough to watch against all imprudent and offensive Actions, against idle Words, against sudden Anger, against Coldness, and some involuntary Excursions in Devotion. And for an Encouragement to this Progress, God Almighty will not only reward them with a bare *saving their*
Souls,

...s, but will liberally bestow on such the Ten
talents, *Luke xix. 24.* He will advance them,
according to their Improvement in Piety, to one
of the highest Thrones in the Heavenly Kingdom ;
For one Star differeth from another Star in Glory,
Cor. xv. 41.

AND now let me speak a Word or two, by
way of Exhortation and Inference from what has
been said.

*First, LET me apply myself to the more ma-
ture and elderly Sort among you.*

You have been long since Instructed in the
principles of the Christian Religion ; you have
had the Catechetical Instruction of the Church
in your younger Days, and have heard the Word
of God constantly Preached unto you in your
later Years ; and therefore you ought not only
to know your Duty, but to be considerable Profi-
cients in it. It is a Shame for you to be ig-
norant of those Christian Doctrines, which the
Children are taught to understand ; and to be then
to learn the Way to Heaven, when you have
hardly Time perhaps before Death to do it in.
Oh ! What a killing Speech is it to hear a Man
say, he did understand Religion when he was
Young ! Wretched Sinner ! What hast thou
been doing of all this Time ? You that ought
to have been the Teacher of Religion to
others, Dost thou want the very Instructions of
this Duty thyself ! How canst thou answer it
to God, to retain thy Trade, thy Debts, and
every thing else in Mind, and only to have for-
got thy Religion ? If there be any such among
you,

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you, get out of this wicked Carelessness as soon as you can ; apply yourselves to the Reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books ; come constantly to Church, and mind what is there said, and be ashamed to continue in such Ignorance any longer.

As for you who have not been so very negligent as to forget your Duty, but yet nevertheless, in despite of your Knowledge, and under Conviction of your own Consciences, do live in a constant Breach of it ; free yourselves with all Speed from this hazardous State, and venture not your Souls in a State of Sin, which you know to be damnable, one Moment longer. How can you answer it to the Mercy of God, to continue in a Course of Wickedness, when he has given you so much Time to repent in ? How can you answer it to your own Consciences, which are continually upbraiding you with neglect of your Duty ? How can you answer it to your Children and Families, to whom you should give an Example of Piety and Religion ? But you set them a Copy only of Profaneness and Wickedness ?

As for those good Persons among you, who have been mindful of the One Thing necessary, and taken Care for their Souls ; who have acquainted themselves *what they are to do to be* SAVED, and have made their Practice conformable to their Knowledge ; let me beseech you, my dear Brethren, to pay God your continual Thanks for this great Measure of Grace bestowed upon you ; to be modest and humble in your Virtuous Accomplishments ; and to ascribe all
your

our spiritual Strength to the Goodness of God ; endeavour more and more to improve in grace ; and, like St Paul, *to forget those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before, and pressing towards the Mark, for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Secondly, AND for the Close of all, let me apply myself to the younger Sort among you.

LET me beseech you to bear in Mind the good Instruction and Christian Information, which you receive from your Pastors and Friends in your Youth ; and let what you learn in those tender Years remain fresh in your Memories under the hoary Head ; let me beseech you to enter upon a Religious Course of Life betimes, because now you have all the Advantages in the World to go forwards in it. You have no inveterate Habits and old Customs of Sinning to conflict with, which oftentimes renders all the Endeavours of a later Age ineffectual. Your Nature now is tender and pliable, and as it takes its bent in this Age, it does for the most Part stand fer ever. Therefore this is the Time to give it a virtuous Impression and a true Bias to Holiness, before the Devil takes Possession of it, and warps it the contrary Way. Think how pleasing and acceptable to God an early Piety is, and what an Affront it is to Dedicate only the Dregs of your Life to his Service, and the Flower of it to the Devil.

ENDEAVOUR to settle in your Minds, now you are Young, a true Taste of Godliness, and of the

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the Excellency of the Christian Religion ; which above all other Religions that ever were in the World, does more especially recommend it. Weigh in your Hearts seriously the admirable Rewards which it promises to those who perform the Conditions of the Gospel, and be not led aside by the Vanities of this World, to forfeit those exceeding Glories of the other. And when you are fully informed, *What you must do to be SAVED*, take care that you do not miss of that Salvation, whereof you know the Methods of obtaining.



F I N I S.

